

(2) Means of effecting the least practicable adverse impact on the species, its habitat, and on the availability of the species for subsistence uses (i.e., mitigation); and

(3) Requirements for mitigation, monitoring and reporting.

(c) Issuance and renewal of the Letter of Authorization will be based on a determination that the total number of marine mammals taken by the activity as a whole will have no more than a negligible impact on the affected species or stock of marine mammal(s).

§216.128 Renewal of Letters of Authorization.

(a) A Letter of Authorization issued under §216.106 and §216.127 for the activity identified in §216.120(a) will be renewed annually upon:

(1) Notification to NMFS that the activity described in the application submitted under §216.126 will be undertaken and that there will not be a substantial modification to the described work, mitigation or monitoring undertaken during the upcoming 12 months;

(2) Timely receipt of the monitoring reports required under §216.125(d) and (e), and the Letter of Authorization issued under §216.127, which has been reviewed and accepted by NMFS; and

(3) A determination by NMFS that the mitigation, monitoring and reporting measures required under §§216.124 and 216.125 and the Letter of Authorization issued under §§216.106 and 216.127, were undertaken and will be undertaken during the upcoming annual period of validity of a renewed Letter of Authorization.

(b) If a request for a renewal of a Letter of Authorization issued under §§216.106 and 216.128 indicates that a substantial modification to the described work, mitigation or monitoring undertaken during the upcoming season will occur, NMFS will provide the public a period of 30 days for review and comment on the request. Review and comment on renewals of Letters of Authorization are restricted to:

(1) New cited information and data indicating that the determinations made in this document are in need of reconsideration, and

(2) Proposed changes to the mitigation and monitoring requirements con-

tained in these regulations or in the current Letter of Authorization.

(c) A notice of issuance or denial of a renewal of a Letter of Authorization will be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

§216.129 Modifications of Letters of Authorization.

(a) Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section, no substantive modification (including withdrawal or suspension) to the Letter of Authorization by NMFS, issued pursuant to §§216.106 and 216.127 and subject to the provisions of this subpart shall be made until after notification and an opportunity for public comment has been provided. For purposes of this paragraph, a renewal of a Letter of Authorization under §216.128, without modification (except for the period of validity), is not considered a substantive modification.

(b) If the Assistant Administrator determines that an emergency exists that poses a significant risk to the well-being of the species or stocks of marine mammals specified in §216.120(b), a Letter of Authorization issued pursuant to §§216.106 and 216.127 may be substantively modified without prior notification and an opportunity for public comment. Notification will be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER within 30 days subsequent to the action.

Subparts L-M [Reserved]

Subpart N—Taking Of Marine Mammals Incidental To Missile Launch Activities from San Nicolas Island, CA

SOURCE: 74 FR 26587, June 3, 2009, unless otherwise noted.

EFFECTIVE DATE NOTE: At 74 FR 26587, June 3, 2009, subpart N, consisting of §§216.150 through 216.159 was added, effective June 2, 2009 through June 2, 2014.

§216.150 Specified activity and specified geographical region.

(a) This subpart applies only to the incidental taking of marine mammals specified in paragraph (b) of this section by the Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division, U.S. Navy, and

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those persons it authorizes to engage in missile launch activities and associated aircraft and helicopter operations at the Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division facilities on San Nicolas Island, California.

(b) The incidental take of marine mammals under the activity identified in paragraph (a) of this section is limited to the following species: northern elephant seals (*Mirounga angustirostris*), harbor seals (*Phoca vitulina*), and California sea lions (*Zalophus californianus*).

(c) This Authorization is valid only for activities associated with the launching of a total of 40 Coyote (or similar sized and smaller) missiles per year from San Nicolas Island, California.

§216.151 Effective dates.

This subpart is effective June 2, 2009 through June 2, 2014.

§216.152 Permissible methods of taking.

(a) Under Letters of Authorization issued pursuant to §§216.106 and 216.157, the U.S. Navy, its contractors, and clients, may incidentally, but not intentionally, take marine mammals by harassment, within the area described in §216.150, provided the activity is in compliance with all terms, conditions, and requirements of the regulations in this subpart and the appropriate Letter of Authorization.

(b) The taking of marine mammals is authorized for the species listed in §216.150(b) and is limited to Level B Harassment.

§216.153 Prohibitions.

Notwithstanding takings contemplated in §216.150 and authorized by a Letter of Authorization issued under §§216.106 and 216.157, no person in connection with the activities described in §216.150 may:

(a) Take any marine mammal not specified in §216.150(b);

(b) Take any marine mammal specified in §216.150(b) other than by incidental, unintentional harassment, as discussed in §216.152;

(c) Take a marine mammal specified in §216.150(b) if such taking results in more than a negligible impact on the

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species or stocks of such marine mammal; or

(d) Violate, or fail to comply with, the terms, conditions, and requirements of this subpart or a Letter of Authorization issued under §§216.106 and 216.157.

§216.154 Mitigation.

(a) The activity identified in §216.150 must be conducted in a manner that minimizes, to the greatest extent practicable, adverse impacts on marine mammals and their habitats. When conducting operations identified in §216.150(c), the mitigation measures contained in the Letter of Authorization issued under §§216.106 and 216.157 must be implemented. These mitigation measures include (but are not limited to):

(1) The holder of the Letter of Authorization must prohibit personnel from entering pinniped haul-out sites below the missile's predicted flight path for 2 hours prior to planned missile launches.

(2) The holder of the Letter of Authorization must avoid launch activities during harbor seal pupping season (February through April), unless constrained by factors including, but not limited to, human safety, national security, or for launch trajectory necessary to meet mission objectives.

(3) The holder of the Letter of Authorization must limit launch activities during other pinniped pupping seasons, unless constrained by factors including, but not limited to, human safety, national security, or for launch trajectory necessary to meet mission objectives.

(4) The holder of the Letter of Authorization must not launch missiles from the Alpha Complex at low elevation (less than 1,000 feet (305 m)) on launch azimuths that pass close to pinniped haul-out sites when occupied.

(5) The holder of the Letter of Authorization must avoid launching multiple missiles in quick succession over haul-out sites, especially when young pups are present, except when required by mission objectives.

(6) The holder of the Letter of Authorization must limit launch activities during nighttime hours, except when required by mission objectives.